

Morgantown Green Team: Minutes of the September 14, 2015 Meeting

Attending: Joey James (Sustainable Morgantown Initiative), Amanda Stoner (Recycling Intern), Pam Cubberly (Green Nights and Green Morgantown), and Jim Kotcon (Energy Committee). **Guests:** Doug and Amy Milbrand, Jessica Lemley and Holly Purpura (Friends of Deckers Creek or FODC), Matthew Held (Greenmont Neighborhood Association), and Termeh Feinberg (WVU student).

- I. Introductions.** As there were many new people attending, a round of introductions was held. Doug and Amy Milbrand said they were interested in learning more about Morgantown's environmental community and are focused on making their country home much more sustainable. Termeh Feinberg is a PhD student at WVU with experience in sustainability. Jessica Lemley is a Vista Volunteer working for FODC. Matthew Held is president of his neighbourhood association and has been involved in the citizen's working group to update and pass a new urban agriculture ordinance.

II. Old Business

None.

III. New Business

- A. Urban agriculture ordinance revisions.** The next night, City Council was to consider newly proposed changes to the General Offenses Code (GOC) that conflicted with proposed changes to the existing urban agriculture ordinance, mainly involving changes to the planning and zoning code. The Green Team had held a community forum last year that led to a citizen's working group, which this past year has worked with the City's Planning Department to update the existing ordinance. Both Matthew Held and Jim Kotcon reviewed the history of the situation, noting that the bulk of the existing ordinance dated back to the 1950s, hence, the interest in updating the existing ordinance to reflect widespread interest in practicing limited forms of urban agriculture by city residents. Matthew noted that planning and zoning code was meant to encourage responsible and reasonable forms of UA; whereas the GOC is meant to discourage activities through penalties; unlike planning and zoning, UA changes to the GOC would not grandfather in practices already being followed by residents. In this case, the changes to the GOC, although raising the number of chickens permitted, would severely restrict the location and setback of where such chickens could be raised, and this has become the focus of debate. Although a revised urban agriculture ordinance within the context of planning and zoning was well on its way to approval by the City Council, a group of residents in the Hopecrest neighborhood had raised objections, primarily because one of its residents had followed existing regulations and started raising 9 or so chickens on their property, obtaining the required permissions from property owners directly abutting her property.

Action: The team then discussed how to get the original proposal back on the table. As the City Council was to discuss both proposals the following evening, Jim Kotcon volunteered to put together a statement presenting the Green Team's point of view, which he would present to council.

- B. Sustainable Morgantown Initiative.** Joey James reported on progress on Phase III of this initiative, which has been supported by the Green Team since its conception. The Morgantown Solar Co-op still promises to be the largest such co-op in West Virginia. The deadline for applications was September

30. A last information meeting was to be held on September 24, as experience showed that many people sign up at the last minute.

Regarding the fee-for-service energy audit portion of Phase III, Joe noted that Leonardo Technologies Inc. was currently identifying the scope of services to offer in the Morgantown market, where it believes strong demand exists, and a price threshold on what residents might be willing to pay.

On the sustainable small business certification portion of Phase III, Joey noted that a Gerry Coleman had spent time in July researching other such efforts that had worked elsewhere and hoped to return this fall to do more work on this. The effort would be complicated by the variety of such small businesses in the area in terms of finding an equitable approach to measuring their sustainability.

Regarding the demand-response system being installed by Mosaic in multiple residence buildings in the area, Joey said that the idea had been adopted by a number of property owners, but that these owners were not automatically looking to invest the savings gained in additional energy efficiency because they have a short-term outlook on their investments so may not be as concerned about investing in such longer-term approaches such as solar.

C. Friends of Decker's Creek activities. Holly Purpura mentioned that FODC was holding an October 17 fundraiser, a beer-tasting at the Morgantown Brewing Company. FODC was also applying for a grant to promote green roofs in the Morgantown area as a way to reduce run-off into local streams and rivers.

D. Other business. Jim Kotcon mentioned recent coverage in the newspaper of a massive development project in the South Parks / South Hills area that could have large impacts on both traffic and open space. In order for the City of Morgantown to assure green concerns on this development were addressed, it would have to annex the land. He noted that this was something the Green Team should probably follow.

E. November Green Team Meeting in Different Location. Due to a MUB meeting scheduled for this date in the City Council Chambers, the Green Team will meet in the Conference Room of the Public Safety Building across the street at the usual time. The building is the one attached to the Parking Garage across from the library. Enter the door near the bronze police statue (at corner of Spruce and Walnut), walk up the steps and the conference room is on the right around the corner directly across from Police Records. If entering from the side entrance, go down the hall and the room is on the left.

IV. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at about 6:50pm. Minutes submitted by Pam Cubberly, October 6, 2015.

Next meeting: November 2, 5:30pm to 7:00pm, in Conference Room, Public Safety Building, Spruce and Walnut Streets.